Headquarters U.S. Air Force

Integrity - Service - Excellence

Debriefing

Date: March 2008

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Training Objective

- **Familiarize source selection teams with debriefing requirements and advice**
- **Brief introduction to potential consequences of a poor debriefing, i.e. protests**
- **Provide a sample format for debriefings**

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Training Outline

- Purpose and Specifics
- Preaward Debriefings
- Postaward Debriefings
- Documentation
- Protest Information
- Example Format for a Debriefing

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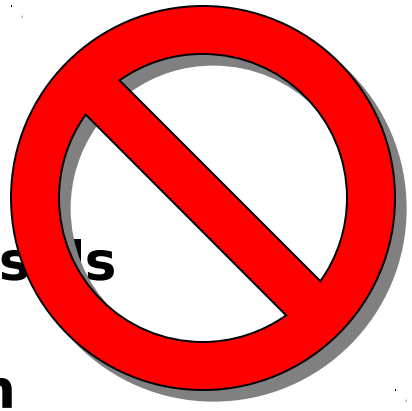
Purpose of Debriefing

1. To explain the rationale for the decision
   - To indicate why an offeror lost and why someone else won
2. To instill confidence the offeror was treated fairly
3. To assure offeror that proposals were evaluated in accordance with RFP, laws, and regulations
4. To identify proposal short-comings so offeror can better prepare in future
   - Both content as well as administrative issues
5. To reduce misunderstandings and protests
6. To provide opportunity for feedback

Purpose of Debriefing

What it is NOT:



1. **Page by page analysis of proposal**
2. **Point by point comparison of proposals**
3. **Debate or defense of SSA's decision**

When to Conduct Debriefing

Government must conduct if:

1. **Offeror makes written request**
2. **Request is received within 3 days after offeror received notice of exclusion from competition, or notice of contract award**

   Ex: Contractor received notice Tuesday

   Request must be received by COB Friday
3. **Debriefing should be conducted within 5 days**
4. **Protest to GAO within 5 days of the debriefing date offered, or 10 days after award (whichever is later) is entitled to automatic suspension of contract performance**

Scheduling Debriefing

1. **Inform offeror of scheduled date in writing with immediate acknowledgment requested**
   - **Schedule as early as possible since a protest filed within 5 days of debriefing can stop contract performance**

2. **If offeror unable to attend scheduled date and requests later date,**
   the deadlines for filing a protest are not automatically extended.
   - **Offeror should acknowledge in writing it was offered on earlier date, but requested a later date**

3. **If offeror submits untimely request for debriefing, CO should inform offeror request is untimely, but conduct debriefing if feasible**
   - **Does not automatically extend deadlines for filing protests**

Where / How to Debrief

1. CO selects suitable location and method

2. May be in writing, by telephone or VTC, or face-to-face

3. Debrief at contractor's facility may be considered
   - Allows a higher degree of industry participation
   - More likely to brief industry decision makers, as opposed to only the emotionally-invested proposal team
   - May reduce likelihood of protest due to misunderstanding

4. Needs of offeror should be afforded due consideration but CO makes final decision

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Who Attends

1. CO chairs and either CO or SSET chairperson briefs

2. Select debriefing attendees before award is announced
   - e.g., JAG, CO, SSET Chief, Evaluation Team Leads

3. Offeror should identify attendees and position prior to debrief

4. Debriefing should be outlined, coordinated by JAG, and followed during debriefing

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Debriefing

1. Introduce attendees
2. Explain purpose
3. Explain ground rules
4. Offerors may submit questions prior to debriefing
5. Offerors may ask questions during debriefing

Preaward Debriefing

1. At offeror's request, may be delayed until after award
2. CO may delay until after award if there are compelling reasons (i.e. if it is not in the best interests of the Gov't)
3. If delayed until after award, use Post-Award guidelines
4. If timely request not filed, debriefing not required
5. Only one debriefing per offeror (either a pre award debriefing or a post award debriefing)
6. Provide description of strengths, deficiencies, uncertainties, weaknesses and past performance information for that offeror
7. Summary of rationale for eliminating that offeror from competition
8. Reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures in the

Preaward Debriefing
What NOT to Disclose

1. Number of offerors
2. Identify of other offerors
3. Content of other offerors proposals
4. Ranking of other offerors
5. Evaluation of other offerors
6. Trade secrets, privileged, confidential information, commercial, financial information that is privileged or confidential such as cost breakdowns, profits, rates, any other proprietary information, etc., names of individuals providing past performance information
7. Any other source selection sensitive information

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Postaward Debriefing

1. Explain evaluation process

2. Identify SSA and attendees

3. Restate Factors, Subfactors

4. Overall evaluated Cost or Price and applicable ratings that were provided to the SSA for that offeror

5. Description of strengths, deficiencies, weaknesses and past performance rating for that offeror

Use the same charts that you briefed to the SSA

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Postaward Debriefing

6. **Overall evaluated Cost or Price, including unit prices, and applicable ratings of successful offeror**
   - **Do not disclose Governments probable cost or similar analysis of the successful offeror's proposed cost/price**
7. **Description provided to SSA of strengths, weaknesses and past performance ratings of successful offeror, appropriately redacted**
8. **If SSA ranked proposals, overall ranking must be disclosed, but only the alphabetical letter for other unsuccessful offerors (Offeror A, B, C)**
9. **Source Selection Decision Document, redacted**
10. **For commercial items, the make and model of successful offeror's item**

Postaward Debriefing
What NOT to Disclose

1. Cost/price of other unsuccessful offerors
2. Names of unsuccessful offeror(s) in ranking
3. Point by point comparison with other offerors
4. Trade secrets, privileged, confidential information, commercial, financial information that is privileged or confidential such as cost breakdowns, profits, rates, any other proprietary information, etc., names of individuals providing past performance information

Debriefing Documentation

- Summarize each debriefing for contract file
- List of persons who attended the debriefing
- Summary of information disclosed (attach charts) for offeror and Government
- Substance of questions and answers discussed at the debriefing, including answers provided after the debriefing

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Protest Information

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Protest Window

- **Must be filed within 10 calendar days after basis of protest is known or should have been known, whichever is earlier**
- **Protester shall not file initial protest before the debriefing date is offered, but must file within 10 days after the date on which the debriefing is held**
- **Protest untimely on its face may be dismissed**
- **GAO will notify the contracting agency by phone within 1 day after the filing of a protest**

Protests After Award

- **Protest filed**
  - **Within 10 days after Contract Award; OR**
  - **Within 5 days after Debriefing Date Offered to the Protestor,**
  - **Whichever is later**

- **CO shall immediately suspend performance or terminate the contract**
  - **Exceptions:**
  - **HCA may authorize contract performance upon written finding that it is in best interests of US; or, urgent and compelling circumstances will not permit waiting for GAO decision**

- **Protest filed after time limit**
  - **Suspension or termination not required**

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Advice/Lessons Learned on Dealing with Protests

Lessons Learned for Debriefings

- **Evaluate proposals in accordance with Section M of your RFP and your source selection plan. (If you didn't, count on a sustained protest if one is filed.)**
- **Follow the source selection rules set forth in the FAR & FAR supplements**
- **Be as open as you intelligently can in your debriefings**
- **Treat offerors fairly, impartially, and professionally**

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Example Format for a Debriefing

Air Force Materiel Command

War-Winning Capabilities … On Time, On Cost

Debriefing
for
(Program Name)

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Overview

- Introduction
- Purpose
- Ground Rules
- Evaluation Criteria
- Basis for Award
- Recommendation for Improvement

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Introduction

- **Program:**
- **RFP Number:**
- **Proposal Debriefing:**
- **Date of Debriefing:**

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Purpose

Our objectives in providing this debriefing are to highlight the significant strengths, deficiencies, weaknesses and past performance information identified during evaluation of your proposal, submitted in response to RFP F33657-xx-R-, and to assist you in the improvement of your future source selection performance.

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Ground Rules

- **Your significant strengths, deficiencies, and weaknesses will be discussed**
- **Your and the successful offeror's overall evaluated cost or price, schedule (tailor to your cost and schedule criteria), and ratings for all factors/subfactors, and your past performance information will be discussed**
- **Summary of the rationale for award, source selection decision document, has already been provided (tailor to your process; often, a redacted decision document is provided to unsuccessful offerors with the notification letter)**

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Ground Rules (Cont'd)

- We will provide reasonable responses to relevant questions about whether source selection procedures contained in the solicitation, applicable regulations, and other applicable authorities were followed
- Answers not provided today will be provided in writing as soon as possible
- A point-by-point comparison of your proposal with those of any of the other offerors' will not be made

Ground Rules (Cont'd)

- This debriefing shall not reveal any information prohibited from disclosure by FAR 24.202 or exempt from release under the freedom of information act, including
  - trade secrets
  - privileged or confidential manufacturing processes and techniques
  - commercial and financial information that is privileged or confidential
  - the names of individuals providing past performance information
- Copies of briefing charts will be provided
- A copy of the redacted SSDD will be provided (if not done previously)

Evaluation Criteria

- **Mission Capability Factor**
- **Past Performance Factor**
- **Cost/Price Risk Factor (if applicable)**
- **Cost/Price Factor**

Tailor to your solicitation

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Basis for Award

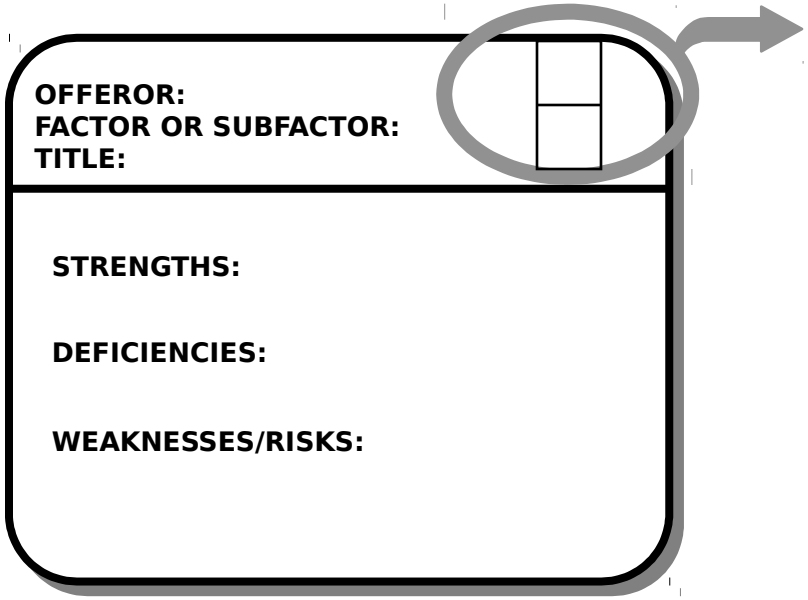
- **Contract award will be made to the responsible offeror whose proposal is determined to provide the best overall value to the government**
  - **Award decision based upon an integrated assessment of the evaluation criteria and general considerations**
  - **The government reserves the right to award to other than the lowest cost or price**
  - **The government reserves the right to award without discussions or negotiations**

Tailor to your solicitation

Recommendation for Improvement

- **Tailor to each offeror**

Chart Format



Mission Capability Technical Rating

R, Y, G, B

Mission Capability Risk Rating

L, M, H, U

Use the same charts that you briefed to the SSA

Helpful Links or References

- **AF Toolkit Part 15**
  https://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/affars/5315/library-5315.html

- **AF Toolkit Part 33 – Protests**
  https://www.safaq.hq.af.mil/contracting/affars/5333/library-5333.html

- **Local ACE, Contract Policy Office and Legal**

- **GAO Bid Protest Regulation**
  http://www.gao.gov/decisions/bidpro/bid/bibreg.html

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Questions?

- **Questions?**
- **Feedback?**
  - **Please complete the Feedback Sheet**
  - **The training modules will be reviewed/updated periodically based on your inputs**